

PATENT COOPERATION TREATY

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INTERNATIONAL PRELIMINARY EXAMINATION REPORT

(PCT Article 36 and Rule 70)

Applicant's or agent's file reference	See Notification of Transmittal of International Preliminary Examination Report (Form PCT/IPEA/416)	
11557-002WO1		
International application No.	International filing date (day/month/year)	Priority date (day/month/year)
PCT/US01/15711	16 May 2001 (16.05.2001)	17 May 2000 (17.05.2000)
International Patent Classification (IPC) or national classification and IPC		
IPC(7): GO6F 15/163, 17/27, 17/30, 17/60, 153:00; G10L 21/00; H04H 1/00 and US Cl.: 704/9, 275; 707/3; 705/14, 27; 455/2.01; 709/245		
Applicant		
ANSWERFRIEND.COM		

1. This international preliminary examination report has been prepared by this International Preliminary Examining Authority and is transmitted to the applicant according to Article 36.

2. This REPORT consists of a total of 5 sheets, including this cover sheet.

☐ This report is also accompanied by ANNEXES, i.e., sheets of the description, claims and/or drawings which have been amended and are the basis for this report and/or sheets containing rectifications made before this Authority (see Rule 70.16 and Section 607 of the Administrative Instructions under the PCT).

These annexes consist of a total of _____ sheets.

3. This report contains indications relating to the following items:

- I ☒ Basis of the report
- II ☐ Priority
- III ☐ Non-establishment of report with regard to novelty, inventive step and industrial applicability
- IV ☐ Lack of unity of invention
- V ☒ Reasoned statement under Article 35(2) with regard to novelty, inventive step or industrial applicability; citations and explanations supporting such statement
- VI ☐ Certain documents cited
- VII ☐ Certain defects in the international application
- VIII ☐ Certain observations on the international application

Date of submission of the demand	Date of completion of this report
20 December 2001 (20.12.2001)	16 February 2005 (16.02.2005)
Name and mailing address of the IPEA/US Mail Stop PCT, Attn: IPEA/US Commissioner for Patents P.O. Box 1450 Alexandria, Virginia 22313-1450 Facsimile No. (703) 305-3230	Authorized officer Lamont M Spooner Telephone No. 703/305-3900

Form PCT/IPEA/409 (cover sheet)(July 1998)

INTERNATIONAL PRELIMINARY EXAMINATION REPORT

International application No.

PCT/US01/15711

I. Basis of the report

1. With regard to the elements of the international application:*

- ☐ the international application as originally filed.
- ☒ the description:
pages 1-34 as originally filed
pages NONE filed with the demand
pages NONE, filed with the letter of _____.
- ☒ the claims:
pages 35-49, as originally filed
pages NONE, as amended (together with any statement) under Article 19
pages NONE, filed with the demand
pages NONE, filed with the letter of _____.
- ☒ the drawings:
pages 1-8, as originally filed
pages NONE, filed with the demand
pages NONE, filed with the letter of _____.
- ☐ the sequence listing part of the description:
pages NONE, as originally filed
pages NONE, filed with the demand
pages NONE, filed with the letter of _____.

2. With regard to the language, all the elements marked above were available or furnished to this Authority in the language in which the international application was filed, unless otherwise indicated under this item.

These elements were available or furnished to this Authority in the following language _____ which is:

- ☐ the language of a translation furnished for the purposes of international search (under Rule 23.1(b)).
- ☐ the language of publication of the international application (under Rule 48.3(b)).
- ☐ the language of the translation furnished for the purposes of international preliminary examination (under Rules 55.2 and/or 55.3).

3. With regard to any nucleotide and/or amino acid sequence disclosed in the international application, the international preliminary examination was carried out on the basis of the sequence listing:

- ☐ contained in the international application in printed form.
- ☐ filed together with the international application in computer readable form.
- ☐ furnished subsequently to this Authority in written form.
- ☐ furnished subsequently to this Authority in computer readable form.
- ☐ The statement that the subsequently furnished written sequence listing does not go beyond the disclosure in the international application as filed has been furnished.
- ☐ The statement that the information recorded in computer readable form is identical to the written sequence listing has been furnished.

4. ☐ The amendments have resulted in the cancellation of:

- ☐ the description, pages NONE
- ☐ the claims, Nos. NONE
- ☐ the drawings, sheets/fig NONE

5. ☐ This report has been established as if (some of) the amendments had not been made, since they have been considered to go beyond the disclosure as filed, as indicated in the Supplemental Box (Rule 70.2(c)).**

* Replacement sheets which have been furnished to the receiving Office in response to an invitation under Article 14 are referred to in this report as "originally filed" and are not annexed to this report since they do not contain amendments (Rules 70.16 and 70.17).

** Any replacement sheet containing such amendments must be referred to under item 1 and annexed to this report.

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V. Reasoned statement under Rule 66.2(a)(ii) with regard to novelty, inventive step or industrial applicability; citations and explanations supporting such statement

1. STATEMENT

Novelty (N)	Claims <u>1-85</u>	YES
	Claims <u>NONE</u>	NO
Inventive Step (IS)	Claims <u>NONE</u>	YES
	Claims <u>1-85</u>	NO
Industrial Applicability (IA)	Claims <u>1-85</u>	YES
	Claims <u>NONE</u>	NO

2. CITATIONS AND EXPLANATIONS

Please See Continuation Sheet

Supplemental Box

(To be used when the space in any of the preceding boxes is not sufficient)

V. 2. Citations and Explanations:

Claims 1-25 and 30 lack an inventive step under PCT Article 33(3) as being obvious over Chang et al (5,321,833).

Chang et al teach a method comprising:

“receiving segment of text, each segment having elements” (claim 10, lines 42-47);

“inferring implicit references from the elements of the segments” (suggested by his spelling variation and his synonym definition 34)

“receiving a query” ((figure 3, his user queries 31);

“in response to the query, identify one or more segments as relevant to the query based at least in part on the implicit references” (his retrieved records and related information in other media form).

It is noted that Chang et al teach the claimed but does not explicitly teach inferring implicit references from the elements.

However, Chang et al teach using the synonym definition and the multilevel model to determine the importance of each term.

Therefore, one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made would have found it obvious to infer implicit references from the elements based on the synonym definition and the multilevel domain as taught by Chang because it would provide an adaptive multilevel record ranking for full text information retrieval where user can specify relevant factor for a relative weighting that would improve the retrieval process.

Claims 26-29 lack an inventive step under PCT Article 33(3) as being obvious over Coden et al (5,873,080).

Coden et al teach a method comprising:

“receiving a question in the form of natural language” (col. 5, lines 26-30 and col. 6, lines 5-20);

“automatically recognizing the speech” 9 (col. 4, lines 64-67);

“feeding the recognized speech to a natural language query...” (col. 6, lines 7-21);

“synthesizing a spoken response ... on the answer” (col. 4, lines 64-67); and

“playing the spoken response back to the source of the question”

(His audio output devices 928).

Claims 31-46 lack an inventive step under PCT Article 33(3) as being obvious over Nielsen et al (5,948,054) in view of Melchione et al (5,966,695).

Nielsen et al teach a method comprising:

“receiving a natural language question from a user” (figure 2, element 215, his natural language description of consultant's qualifications, col. 1, lines 56-59);

“deriving information about the use from the question” col. 3, lines 65-67, col. 2, lines 1-45);

“generating an answer to the question using a natural language” (figure 2, col. 1, lines 56-59); and returning the answer to the user together with the promotional information (col. 5, lines 51-67, col. 6, lines 1-67, col. 7, lines 1-37).

It is noted that Nielsen et al teach the claimed invention but does not explicitly teach a query engine. However, this feature is well known in the art as evidenced by Melchione who teaches a sales and marketing support system using a graphical query prospect

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Supplemental Box

(To be used when the space in any of the preceding boxes is not sufficient)

database including a query engine at col. 11, lines 198-27. Therefore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to incorporate the query engine of Melchione in the system of Nielsen because it would provide capable of enabling electronic sales and service support system for identifying sales target using a centralized databases to improve

Claims 47-54 lack an inventive step under PCT Article 33(3) as being obvious over Horvitz et al (6,021,403)
Horvitz et al teach a method comprising

"receiving natural language questions from a user" (abstract);

"using a natural language query engine to provide natural language answers to the questions" col. 5, lines 41 to col. 7, line 4);

"enabling the user to take steps through a user interface after questions are received or answers are provided" (col. 6, lines 35-65);

generating a log of information the questions... (Figure 12, his recording the histogram of help topic 150)

"in real time updating the user profile" (figure 4, his user profile system 78, col.3, lines 21-34)

"using natural language processing to extract meaning form the question" (col. 23, line 35-46).

It is noted that Horvitz et al teach the claimed invention but does not explicitly teach "selecting content for web pages that are served to the user". However, this feature is well known in the art. Therefore, one having ordinary skill I the art at the time the invention was made would have found it obvious to recognize that Horvitz's system because it would provide a system capable of building an intelligent user assistance that can select content of web page that would render the system more versatile.

Claims 55-58 lack an inventive step under PCT Article 33(3) as being obvious over Ho (5,884,302) in view of Theimer et al (5,812,865)

Ho teaches a method comprising

"entering a natural language question";(generating a natural language answer to the question" and "presenting the natural language answer to a user" (abstract).

It is noted that Ho teaches the claimed invention but does not explicitly teach entering a natural language on a wireless personal electronic device". However, this feature is well known in the art as evidenced by Theimer et al who teach at col. 6, lines 34-56, a wireless communication is used for entering information. Therefore, one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made would have it obvious to incorporate into Ho's system a wireless communication as taught by Thierner because it would improve the communication system capable of being remotely.

Claims 70-85 lack an inventive step under PCT Article 33(3) as being obvious over Hussey et al (5,826,269)

Hussey teaches a method comprising:

"receiving from a user, over an electronic network, an electronic mail"(his electronic mail system 20);

"identifying the written natural language query " (col. 3, lines 28 to col. 4, line 16)

"using a natural language query engine to apply the natural language query to a body of information, to generate responsive to the query"; (col. 4, line 41 to col. 12, line 57); and

"taking an action based on the responsive information" (col. 7, lines 20-36).